



North Dakota Department of Health

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

Jan. 8, 2004

For More Information Contact:

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MEDIA ADVISORY
(News Release Follows Below)

BISMARCK, N.D. – To answer media questions about influenza activity in the state, the North Dakota Department of Health will hold a telephone media availability Thursday, Jan. 8, 2004, at 1 p.m. The following department officials will participate in the 1 p.m. conference call:

- Dr. Craig Lambrecht, state medical officer
- Larry Shireley, state epidemiologist
- Heather Weaver, Immunization Program manager
- Melissa Casteel, Influenza Surveillance coordinator

To connect to the conference call, the media is asked to follow these steps:

- 1) Dial 866.262.1846.
- 2) Once you are connected, enter *3282378*. (Please note: The star key must be pressed before and after the pin number.)
- 3) If you have trouble connecting, call the help desk at 800.263.3863 option 2.

Weekly conference calls with the media will be held each Thursday throughout the flu season until further notice. Any additional media calls concerning influenza should be directed to Loreeta Leer Frank, Public Information Officer, at 701.328.1665.

State Health Department Reports 1,459 Cases of Influenza

Influenza Update #6 – Jan. 8, 2004

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health today announced that 1,459 cases of influenza have been reported in the state, up from 1,261 reported last week.

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Visit the health department home page at www.health.state.nd.us

The following is a breakdown by age of the influenza cases reported to the department:

- Younger than 10 – 622
- Ages 10 to 19 – 314
- Ages 20 to 29 – 163
- Ages 30 to 39 – 82
- Ages 40 to 49 – 51
- Ages 50 to 59 – 41
- Age 60 and older – 186

“Because the influenza season may very well continue for weeks, it’s not too late to be vaccinated,” said State Epidemiologist Larry Shireley. “The Department of Health recently purchased about 700 doses of injectable vaccine for younger children and is working to purchase additional doses for people age 4 and older. People at high risk of developing complications from the flu are encouraged to receive a flu shot, while healthy people between the ages of 5 and 49 can receive the FluMist™ nasal vaccine. Anyone seeking vaccine should contact his or her health-care provider or local public health unit.”

The department recommends that people in the following high-risk groups be vaccinated:

- Children ages 6 months through 23 months
- People age 65 and older
- Adults and children who have a chronic health condition, such as heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, asthma, cancer and HIV/AIDS
- Women at least 14 weeks pregnant during the flu season

To prevent the spread of influenza, the Department of Health urges everyone to:

- Wash hands frequently with soap and water. Hand washing is one of the best preventive measures, not only for influenza, but for all diseases.
- Use good respiratory manners. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when sneezing or coughing.
- Stay home from work or other recreational activities when you’re ill. This will help prevent the spread of influenza to your friends, coworkers and family.

Common signs and symptoms of influenza include abrupt onset of fever, muscle aches, sore throat and cough.

For more information about influenza activity in North Dakota, visit www.ndflu.com.

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